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Exploring Domestic Violence on Google Trends

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ABSTRACT:
Current headlines have brought a vast amount of attention to domestic violence. Violence against women has continuously been an issue but in the last few years it has brought individuals widespread curiosity to explore online search engines like Google. The source of this information was established by Google Trends, which is a part of Google that allows internet users to display the rate of recurrence of searches for a particular term or phrase.
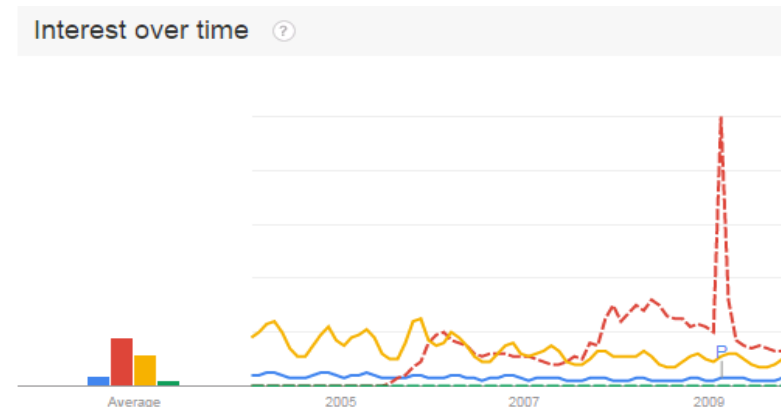
KEYWORDS: Domestic Violence, Celebrity Domestic Violence, Google Trends, Violence

Current headlines have brought a vast amount of attention to domestic violence. Violence against women has continuously been an issue but in the last few years it has brought individuals widespread curiosity to explore online search engines like Google. The source of this information was established by Google Trends, which is a part of Google that allows internet users to display the rate of recurrence of searches for a particular term or phrase. The trends observed when searching multiple terms related to this topic and analyzing the regional differences between them proved interesting. The reputation of the victims as well as the offenders was the first thing that came to mind when pondering domestic violence; that seemed like the obvious cause to why there would be so much popularity in searching for those terms. Even though the individuals involved may possibly be

Figure 1. Domestic Violence in Relation to Chris Brown & Ray Rice

the reason, the articles and broadcasts provided during those times of anguished has brought awareness to the public as a whole. Reminding individuals that domestic violence is still an issue that has to be resolved.

A Google Trends search for the term "domestic violence" displayed in blue in the chart provided on the next page reveals steady search traffic but does show a small spike when strung with another term coded in green, which is "Ray Rice" during the month of September 2014. For a bit of background, Ray Rice was a running back for the Ravens NFL team and from the looks of it did not have much popularity on Google Trends before this past year. Likewise, a search shown in red for "Chris Brown" reveals a dramatic spike in the month of February 2009 when he was accused of beating his now ex-girlfriend Rihanna.
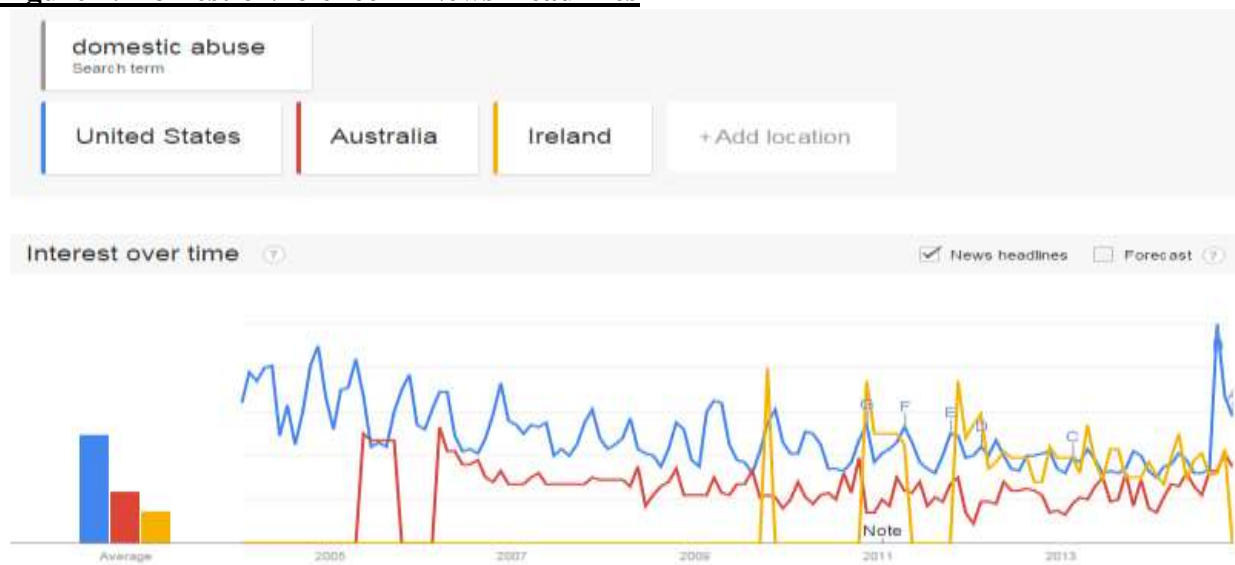
Another feature of Google Trends is the ability to provide any news headlines on the terms or phrases searched. A particular news headline on the term "violence" was one of the many that stood out, labeled "B" on the line graph was an article posted on the Hamilton Spectator and the title read "NFL to partner with domestic violence hotline," this was around the time Ray Rice committed his offense. Another news headline alleged Baseball also addressed Domestic Violence soon after. On the "domestic violence" frequency the news headline labeled "O" near the time of Chris Browns violation sourced from the Baltimore Sun wrote that legislators were considering domestic violence bills. Simultaneously, the Los Angeles Times came out with an article revealing Rihanna left Chris Brown to set an example for other domestic violence victims. With a total set of terms "domestic violence, Ray Rice, Chris Brown, violence" searched on Google Trends' main page, the trends were dynamic and within the timeframe of 2004 to present. The comparison between the terms presented interesting information and shows the rate at which individuals search those terms as well as related headlines that bring awareness to the public.

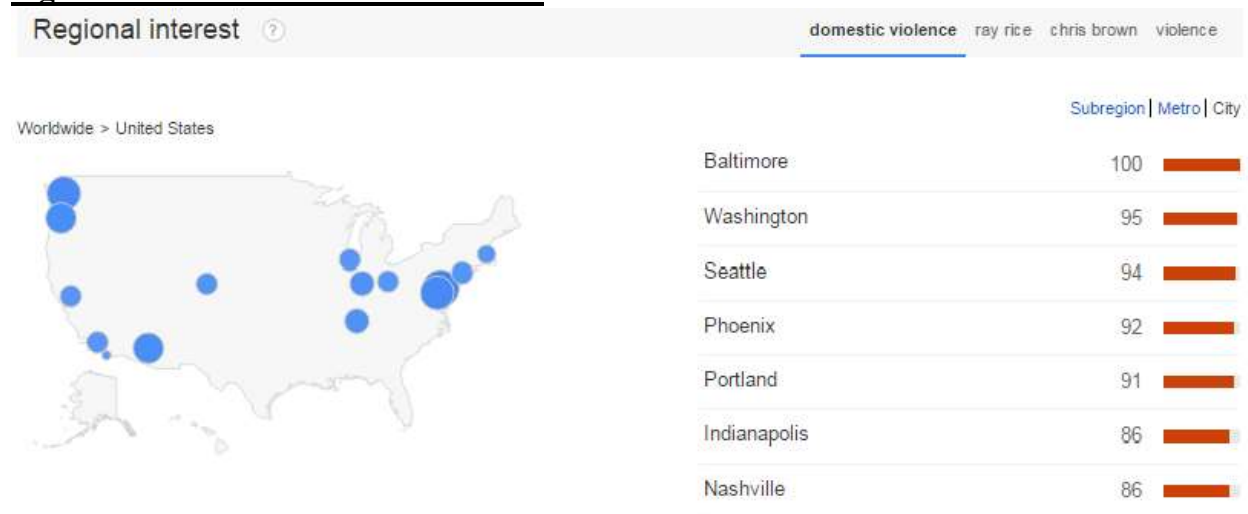## Figure 2. Domestic Violence in News Headlines

The regional differences between the United States, Ireland and Australia when searching the term "Domestic abuse" was in fact informative. United States had the highest continuous rate of search traffic while Australia was slightly below them. Ireland abruptly spikes in 2011 due to an improvement of Google Trends geographical development. Nevertheless, a news headline labeled "G" took place, generated from the Irish Examiner stated domestic abuse was being reported every 20 minutes in the north. In the United States evidently there was a jump in the term "domestic abuse" during fall of 2014 as shown in the figure above, numerous due to professional athletes. The general trends seem to correlate to events that have occurred in each nation.

Google Trends also lists cities and states within a location of choice with the highest amount of search traffic for a given term. For "domestic violence" in the United States some of the highest cites listed were Baltimore with a search index of 100 and Los Angeles with an 82. Both cities relate to the Chris Brown and Ray Rice cases, Baltimore for the reason that Ray Rice's team the Ravens are located there and Los Angeles because Chris Brown resides nearby.
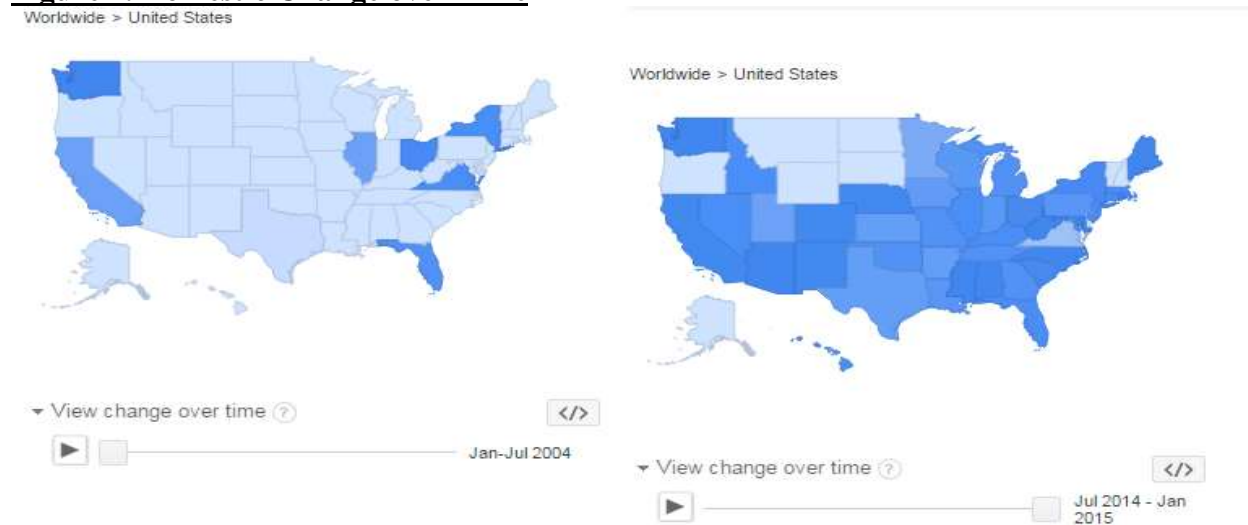
Figure 3. Domestic Violence in the U.S.

The material that was truly remarkable was the feature that allows to view change over time. Shown below from January 2004 to a forecast of 2015 the amount of search traffic for the term "domestic violence" began with several dark blue areas in the United States and finally the country was completely filled up with a few states a lighter shade of blue, the complete opposite. Domestic violence and its change over time is continuing to increase and the situation appears to be getting worse.

Figure 4. Domestic Change over Time

Having the privilege to gain this information is in fact beneficial. Being able to compare terms and coming to conclusions of relationships between them displays interesting information. A disadvantage for using Google Trends could be the possible confusion at times with the letters and multiple numbers included on the graph labeled "Interest over time" along with when analyzing the "Regional interest" graph, the search index was unclear as well. Google Trends does not make available absolute numbers of searches and that might be the reason for

confusion and could be considered a limitation, yet the information provided is still readily accessible and useful. Using Google Trends to study how terms or phrases reveal and even forecast what is happening in our world globally or within cities and states in regards to health can prove accommodating.

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